1: Karsten--272-274
116, 672, 627, 828

(1916-18) 1935
(1928-29)

Jivaro-1

"Among the Jibaros blood-revenge is not strictly individualized in the sense that it always directs itself exclusively against the slayer. The Jibaro certainly first of all wants to take revenge on the person who committed the crime; but if he cannot be caught it may instead be directed against some one of his relatives--his brother, his father, even his mother or sister. To understand this we have to consider that the conception of individual personality, and consequently of individual responsibility, does not exist among the primitive Indians in the same sense as among civilized peoples. The individual forms an inseparable part of a whole, namely, of the family or tribe to which he belongs. Especially the members of the same family are regarded as, so to speak, organically coherent with each other, so that one part stands for all and all [273] for one. What happens to one member of that social unit happens to all, and for the deed of one member the rest are held equally responsible. How the Jibaros conceive this connection appears from certain of their social customs. For instance, custom requires that after a child is born the parents shall fast and observe other rules of abstinence for a couple of years, or until the child is weaned. This is due to the idea that something of the souls or essence of the parents inheres in the child, so that all three in one way form a single organism, a single personality. But this mystic connection between the parents and the child also subsists after the child has grown up, although perhaps less intimately. Similarly the tie which unites brothers and sisters

in a family is so intimate that they may be said together to form one organic whole. Among the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians, when one member of the family is sick the rest have to diet in the same way as the patient himself, for if they eat unsuitable food it would be the same as if the patient ate that food, and his condition would grow worse. From the same point of view we have to explain the custom prevailing among the Jibaros that when a man dies his brother must marry the widow. The departed husband, who is still jealous of the wife he left behind, does not cede her to any other man than his brother, who with himself forms one personality and represents him in the most real sense of the word. When a younger Jibaro is murdered by his enemies the duty of revenging his death is also first of all incumbent on his brothers.

The Jibaro cannot even distinguish his own personality from his material belongings, at least not from things he has made himself. When he makes a shield, a drum, a blowgun, or some other delicate object, he has to diet and observe abstinence in other ways; for, according to his belief, he actually puts something of his own personality, his own soul, into the object he is making. His own properties, both the essential and habitual ones and those occasionally acquired through eating a certain food, etc., will therefore be transferred to that object. The division of labour existing among the Indians depends on the same peculiar view. Thus, for instance, the Indian woman has

to make the clay vessels and manage these utensils, because the clay of which they are made, like the earth itself, is female--that is, has a woman's soul. She is connected with the fire and has to cook the food, because the fire has a female soul, etc.

Such a view prevailing among the Indians, it is easy to understand that a Jibaro, in regard to the murder of one of his relatives, asks not [274] so much which individual has committed the deed, but rather reasons in the following way: "'A member of that family has murdered my relative; consequently, in revenge, some member of that family must die'."

l: Karsten--274 (1916-18) 1935 Jivaro
116, 627, 672 (1928-29)

"When a murder committed by tribesman is to be avenged, the social morality of the Jibáros requires that the punishment shall be meted out with justice, in so far that for one life which has been taken only one life should be taken in retaliation. Thereupon the blood-guilt is atoned for (tumáshi akérkama) and the offended family is satisfied. Consequently, if a Jibaro Indian wishes to avenge the murder of his brother, it may well happen that he, if the slayer himself cannot be caught and punished, will assassinate his brother or father instead of him, but he does not take the life of more than one member of the family, even if he has an opportunity of killing more. If he, for instance, killed not only the murderer himself but also one of his brothers, this would awaken indignation in the whole tribe, and it would be considered just that the family thus offended in its turn should take revenge. The blood guilt in such a case has passed to the original avenger. This principle, which requires that there shall be justice in the retaliation so that life is weighed against life, in itself of course has a tendency to limit blood-revenge. It happens, however, in many cases, and especially when supposed witchery is in question, that the person accused of the crime does not admit the guilt, but asserts that he and his family are innocently persecuted by the relatives of the dead. If then he or a member of his family is murdered, his relatives try, in their turn, to take revenge, and so on, in which case the blood feud tends to become prolonged indefinitely."